

FTM's Digital Decade:

How a Physical Newsletter
Transitioned to the Digital World

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Moving Trans Histories Forward

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Unearthing Transmasculine Histories

Transmasculine Literature

FTM issues frequently included book reviews, poetry, and humorous comics. Notably, Leslie Feinberg's *Stone Butch Blues* (1993) continues to be heralded in trans and lesbian communities as a groundbreaking text. *Stone Butch Blues* highlights thin borders between butch lesbianism and trans masculinity. In addition to creating the *FTM* Newsletter and spearheading FTM Meetups, Lou Sullivan was a trans-masculine gay activist who convinced the medical establishment that transgender men could also be gay. Sullivan's poem is a powerful reminder of the conflicting societal gender expectations imposed onto transgender men.



[FTM Issue #23, page 4](#)

Gender and the Law in 1998

Dion Manley was a key volunteer with *FTM* in the late 1990s, and served as the President of FTM International from 2000 to 2002. In the late 1990s, *FTM* issues began to include direct calls to political action. Laws permitting gender-based discrimination were common in the United States and abroad. These laws directly impacted trans people and their job security, insurance coverage, and housing security. Many trans activists were



Dragushan, “FTM: Building Trans Community” on Omeka

The FTM Newsletters

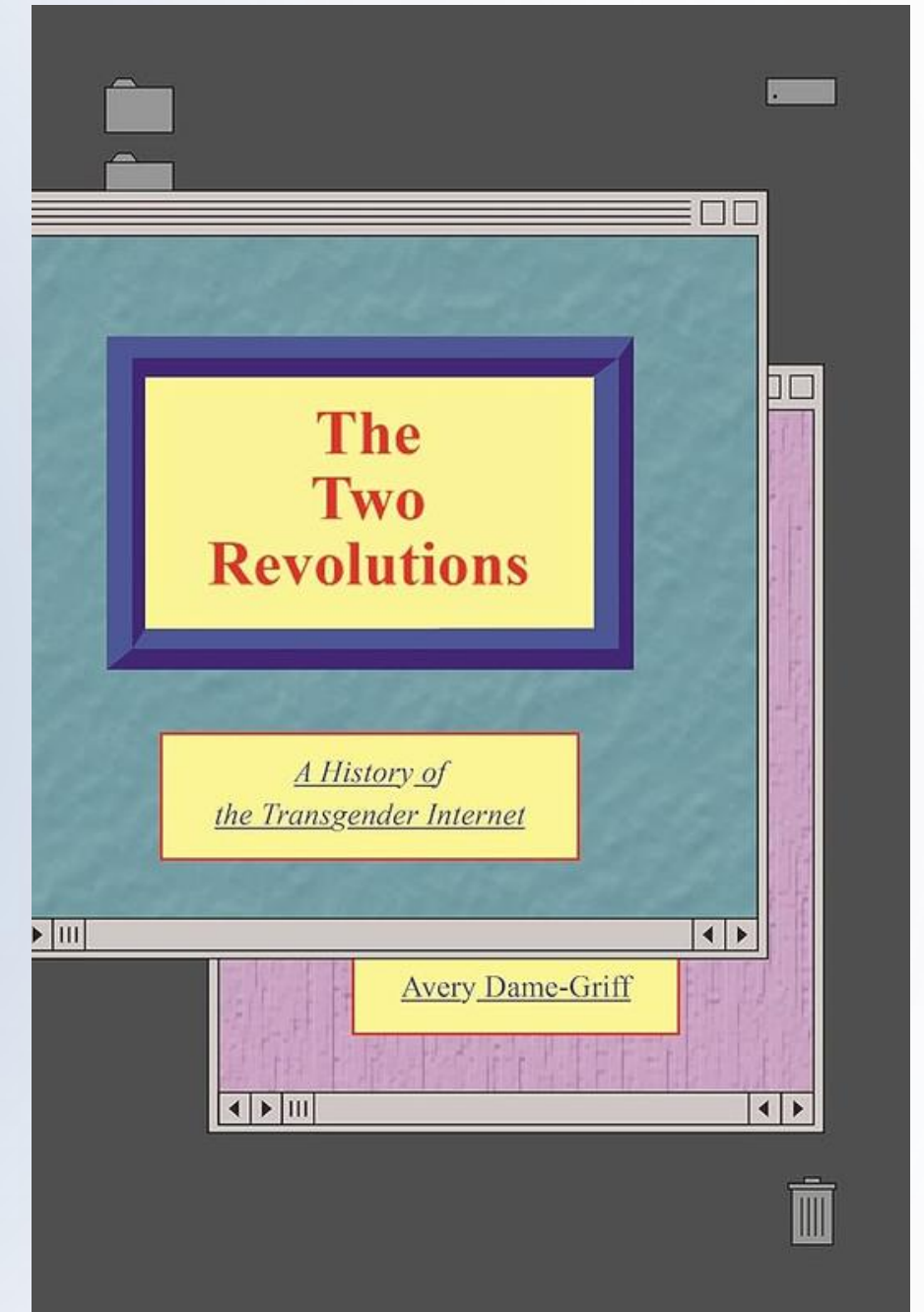
An Introduction

‘FTM’, or ‘Female to Male’, describes the transition process of a person born female later identifying with a male gender identity. The *FTM* newsletter was created by Lou Sullivan, and published quarterly from 1987 to 2008. *FTM* promoted the connection and community-building of like-minded transmasculine individuals, as well as included articles, book and film reviews, and the ‘malebox’, where readers could write to the Editors and ask questions or seek advice. Many readers writing to *FTM* or writing articles for *FTM* did so using a pseudonym, although some prominent activists’ work can be traced back to the pages of *FTM*.



[FTM Issue #15, page 1](#)

Sullivan had started an in-person FTM Support Group in the early 1980s in San Francisco. Likely inspired by Rupert Raj's *Metamorphosis* newsletter in Toronto (1982–1985), Sullivan began publishing a newsletter for the transmasculine community in San Francisco (*FTM Newsletter Panel*, 13:51-14:51). After Sullivan passed away in 1991 due to AIDS related complications, Jamison Green agreed to take over the *FTM* Newsletter and FTM Support Meetings.



Dame-Griff, The Two Revolutions

The FTM Newsletter

67 ISSUES: 1987-2008



Lou Sullivan

FTM Cover, Issue #51, 1991



Jamison Green

GLSEN, 2011

Tranny Fest/Tranny Week

TRANSGENDER AND TRANSGENRE CINEMA

A finger-snapping, grain-bumping, tear-jerking, heartwarming, gut-busting mix of experimental, documentary, drama and pornographic film! Titles include: *Machiko Saito's Premenstrual Spotting*, *Charles LaFon's Look of Love*, *Rae Rea's Third*, *Valentin Aguirre's Wanted Alive*, *Tereshita*, *La Campesina*, *Jordy Jones's Shotgun*, *Lucia Davis's Kings of New York* and *Elise Hurwitz and Christopher Lee's Trappings of Transhood* and more, including premieres and directors in person! It all kicks off with TRANNY WEEK:

- Nov. 17 "Papi-manita, Mami-papita"—TG/Genderqueer reading 6:30-8:30 pm, Proyecto Contra SIDA por Vida, 2973 16th St.
- Nov. 18 "Taking control of our media image"—TG/Genderqueer panel 7 pm, Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center, 187 Golden Gate Ave.
- Nov. 19 Evening performance event—8 pm, TARC
- Nov. 20 Schmoose Fest—Appreciation party Sponsors, co-presenters, filmmakers, supporters 6-8 pm, the Chat House, 139 8th St. at Mima TG/Genderqueer Filmmaker panel and reception Proyecto Contra SIDA por Vida
- Nov. 21 Tranny Fest film festival: Raxie Cinema, 3117 16th St. 6 explosive programs 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 pm

Hotline:
415-552-4249

trannyfest@aol.com
http://members.aol.com/trannyfest

1st International Transgender Film and Video Festival in London

From October 29 to November 2, London was host to the first-ever international transgender film festival—a five-day event featuring more than 60 documentaries, experimental shorts and independent feature films and videos, as well as guest speakers, panel discussions, a costumed Gala Ball and a photographic exhibition.

The festival included the award-winning documentaries *Transsexual Menace*, Rosa von Praunheim's film about the cross-cultural US transgender movement, and Bestor Cram's and Candace Schermerhorn's *You Don't Know Dick—The Courageous Hearts of Transsexual Men*. Also featured was Baillie Walsh's *Mirror, Mirror*, which portrayed black transsexual and survivor Consuela Cosmetic, living with AIDS and negotiating her gender image after a mastectomy.

The diversity of transgender people was reflected in 15 programs of films, including the themed program "Hermaphrodites With Attitude" addressing the identities of intersexual people. All the films and videos suggested ways to rethink the relationships between gender, sex, sexuality and the body.

Organizer Zach Nataf described the aim of the festival: "to advance cultural works by and/or about transgender people of all races, classes, creeds, abilities and sexualities...to contribute to creating a sense of self worth and pride, especially for transgender youth, by countering negative stereotypes and myths which marginalize transgender people in our society and perpetuate shame and discrimination."

"By transgender we mean all people who challenge traditional assumptions about gender, i.e. all self-identified cross-gender people whether intersex, transsexual men and women, transvestites, cross-dressing drag kings and drag queens, cross-living transgenderists and the spectrum of androgynous, bi-gendered, third-gendered and as yet unnamed gender-variant and gender-gifted people in our community."

FTM INTERNATIONAL

Trappings of Transhood

Interview by Jed

Trappings of Transhood is a 27-minute video documentary about gender identity, produced, edited, and directed by Elise Hurwitz and Christopher Lee, with assistant editor J. Carranza and Seattle production assistant L. H. Kuniyuki. After seeing *Trappings*, I asked Christopher and Elise to answer some questions about themselves, their film, and why people should see it.

J: Do you identify as transgendered, Elise?

E: More as non-gendered, or all-gendered. In a large definition of transgendered, yes; in the narrower, smaller definition that a lot of people subscribe to, no. Non-, or all-, seems better to me than trans.

J: And do you identify as an FTM transsexual, Christopher?

C: I don't identify as transsexual. I get ambivalent about identifying at all, because I think that this language is a continuum.

It's like, I identified as lesbian, and then the language changed from what it meant originally. For lack of language, if you have to define what I am, I guess I'd refer to myself as FTM. We're both against it, that kind of narrowing...I feel like we're much more than that. I don't want to be seen as a transgender filmmaker, although partially I am that.

J: It's important to me that you're trans because several non-transgendered people have made movies about transgendered people. So, let's see, I was going to say *Trappings* is a documentary about all kinds of trans guys...

C: Number one, not all the people are trans guys. A lot of them don't identify as transgendered; they identify as one metamorph, one boydyke, one dyke-fag or trans-fag—more of a gender continuum. I think our basic purpose for this video is to show the gender continuum, so that's the better phrase than trying to pitch it as an FTM thing because it's definitely not that. Or to pitch it as about all trans guys because they're not.

J: So how would you describe the category of people portrayed in this movie?

C: I would say it's the gender continuum, everything all the way from butches, FTMs—well, do we want to do the whole laundry list?

E: My impression of the list is that it puts one thing at one end, and another thing at another end, and names those ends. I want to say, look, there's no one end to another end; the continuum is completely on-going. I feel equally as strongly about such things as the butch-femme thing, "femme de center," all of that garbage. I think everyone that we interview, and ourselves, are constantly re-interrogating their own position in that.

C: And they can have two or three positions.

E: And I think a lot of people who we talked to



Kory Martin-Damen in Trappings of Transhood

Issue 32



October '95

Conference Shines!

Movement Grows By Leaps And Bounds

Well, we did it! The first all-FTM conference in the "Gender Community" happened here in San Francisco, August 18-20, and the event was a success well beyond our expectations. The official count of registered participants was 362, but I'm sure there were closer to 400 people there on Saturday, the day of the workshops. I estimated that about 70% of the attendees were transgendered or transsexual men, about 20% were partners, and 10% friends and supporters. So many people registered in the last few weeks prior to the conference that we had to move the meeting location to a larger space! The energy among all attendees was incredible, and I think many of us found new friends, new information, new pride, and new excitement about our lives.

I want to express my appreciation in print to all those who helped support and organize the FTM Conference, and all who participated in it as presenters, panelists, and attendees. Special recognition is due to Sky Rofin, Conference Coordinator, who worked day and night to make it all happen, and who took the initiative to issue a proclamation recognizing FTM International and the historical significance of the FTM Conference. The others who really worked hard to lay all the groundwork and keep things running smoothly were Jay and Marcy, Registration Managers; Michiko, Volunteer Manager; Marzan, Site Manager; Alexander and Ray, Housing Managers; Yolanda, Exhibit Manager; and Scott, Hospitality Manager. Behind the scenes, Bryan, Stephen and Michiko, and Sage all participated in early planning, and Stafford and Jordy facilitated things as well. Special acknowledgment also goes to Michiko and Marcy for facilitating the partner sessions, which were very

important to many people. Conspicuous in their absence, Rhonda and Katherine, who worked on developing Conference events, but were prohibited from attending due to Rhonda's ill health. Fortunately, he has recovered.

Elsewhere in this issue, several participants have written commentary about the Conference, so I won't go on and on about it. The next best thing to being there is to hear it on audio tape, and an order form for the programs that were recorded is also included with this issue. And I've submitted a financial report (appearing elsewhere in this issue)

intention that this money be used to further the purpose of FTM International, which is to provide information and networking for transsexual men and transgendered women exploring masculinity. First of all, let me assure everyone that the FTM Newsletter will continue! I know I threatened to put it on hiatus after next January if I didn't get some help, and my threat worked. Two men, Marzan [http://www.marzan.com](#) and I've already helping on this issue and on January's issue, so that by April 1996 (issue #34) they will take over as co-editors, and I will become an occasional columnist. I know both Marzan and I are hard working and conscientious, and I'm sure they will continue to develop the FTM Newsletter as an open forum for all our community. I'm very grateful to them both for stepping forward, and I'm sure our subscribers are grateful, too. Look for Conference Reflections by each of them in this issue to get a glimpse of who they are.



The FTM Conference - Group shot showing about one fourth of the happy conference attendees

so that other groups can see what a good fundraiser a well-run and inexpensive conference can be. I hope that a group from the East Coast will want to host the next all-FTM Conference, and maybe we can make this a biennial event alternating between regions. I know the Seattle guys would like to host, and I suspect the Southern California guys would, too. But I think we all agree that we don't want to turn this into a West Coast event, so please, someone from out there let us know, by February 1, 1996, of your intention to host this event, and we'll provide the seed money that was given to us by AEGIS, as well as some additional donations earmarked for the next Conference, and you'll be on your way!

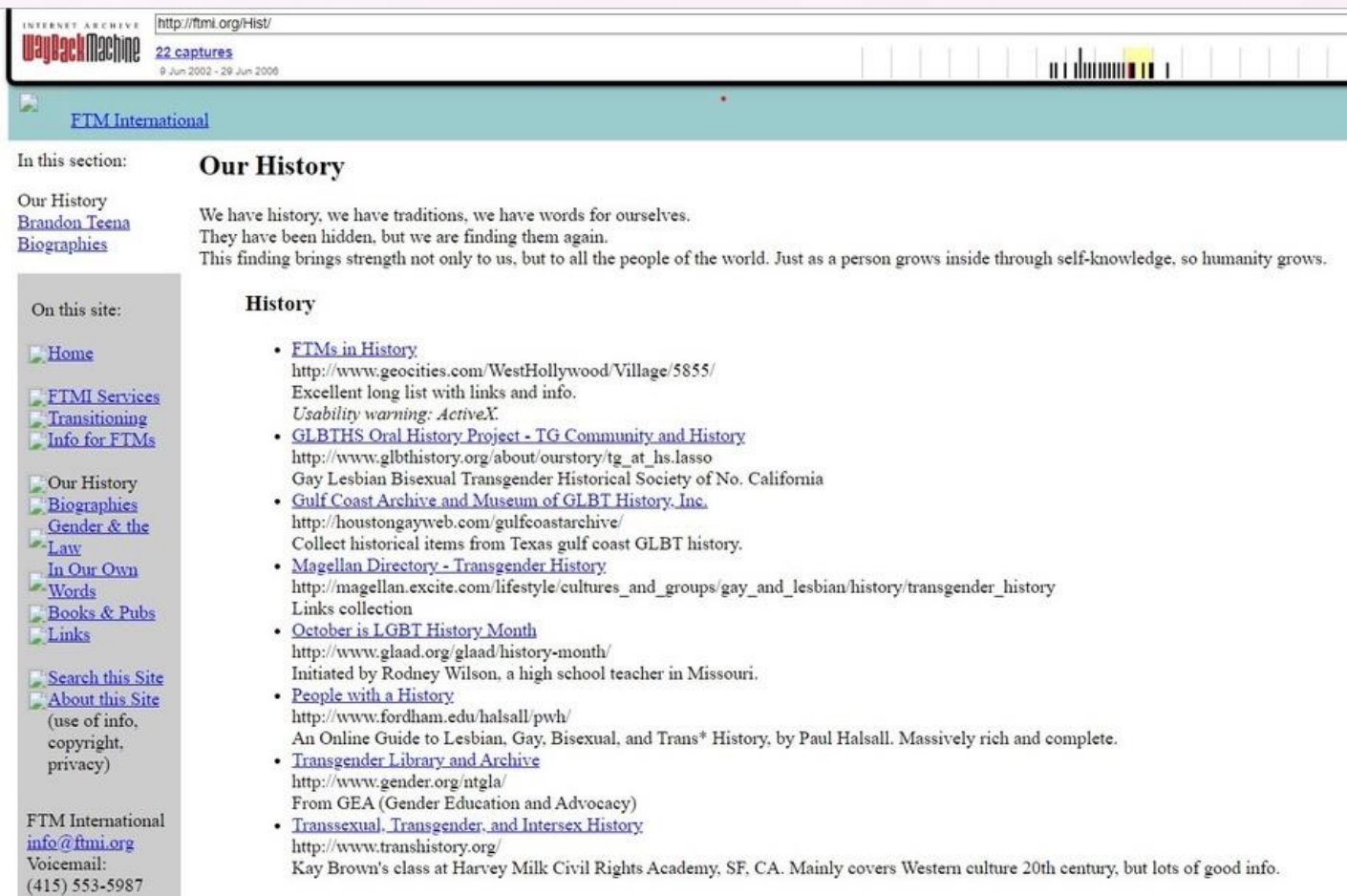
Readers may wonder what we intend to do with all the proceeds from the Conference. It is my

CONTINUED PAGE 9

Special Conference Issue

"Tranny Fest" + "Trappings of Transhood" Interview, FTM Issue #39, p. 6, 1997

Review of first FTM Conference in August 1995, FTM Issue #32, p. 1, 1995

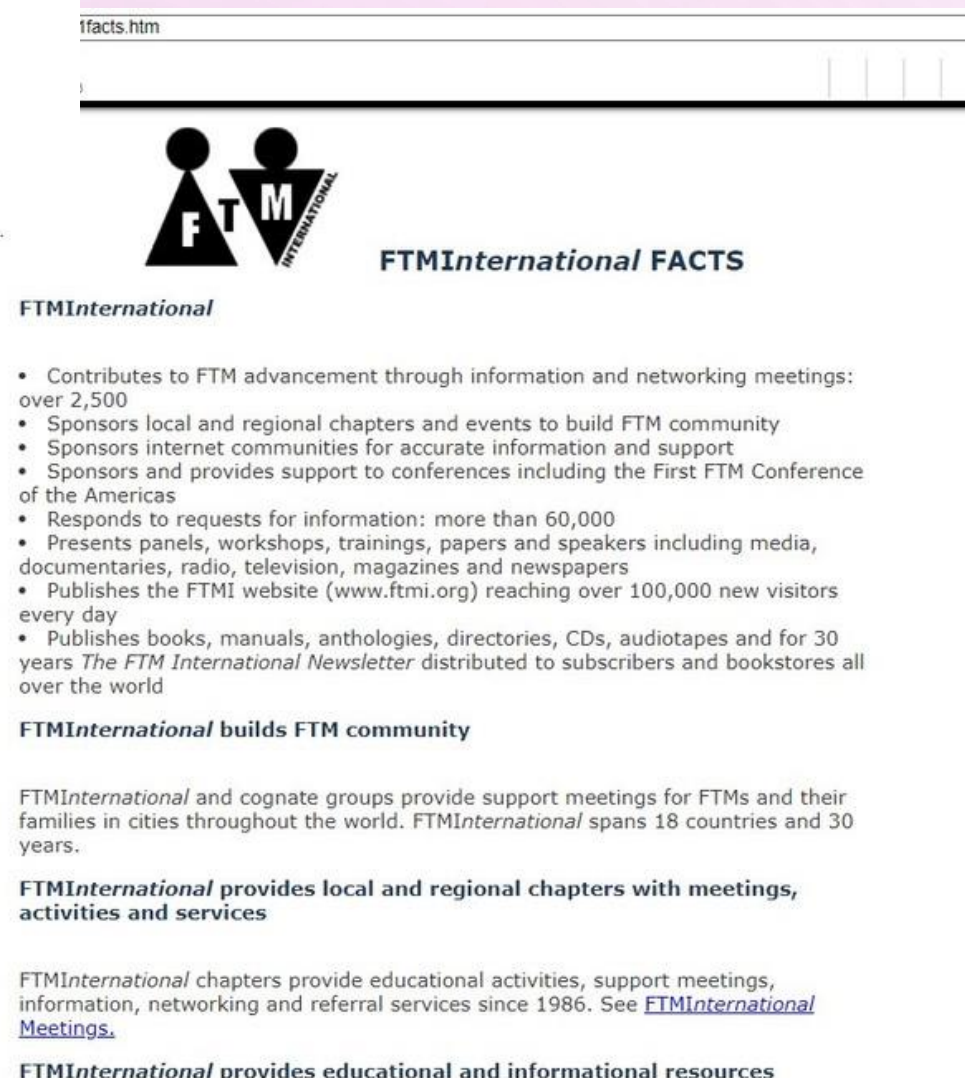


“Our History” on the
FTM Website (2016)

“FTMInternational
Facts” on the FTM
Website (2004)

Public Transition to the Digital

1995–2008

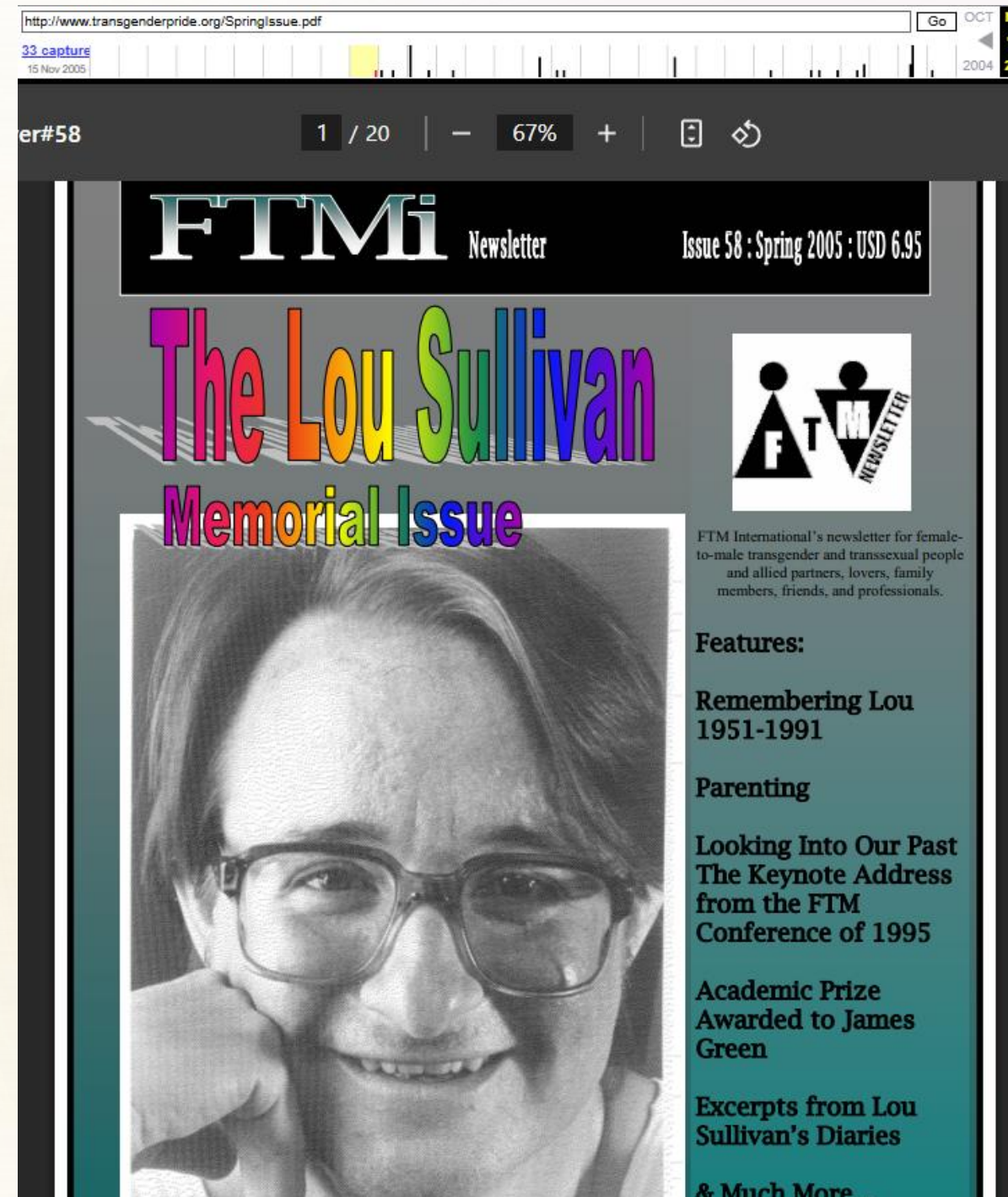


FTM-intl.org

Digital History

FTMI.org

- **Prioritizing Access**
- **FTM owned “the goddamned servers”**



“Sample Newsletter” on the
FTM Website, 2005



“web hosting”, FTM
Issue #63, p. 2, 2007

FTM: Building Trans Community

- Global Transmasculine Community
- Shaping the Internet
- Early Digital Repository
- Read for free online!

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FTM Issue #45, page 1

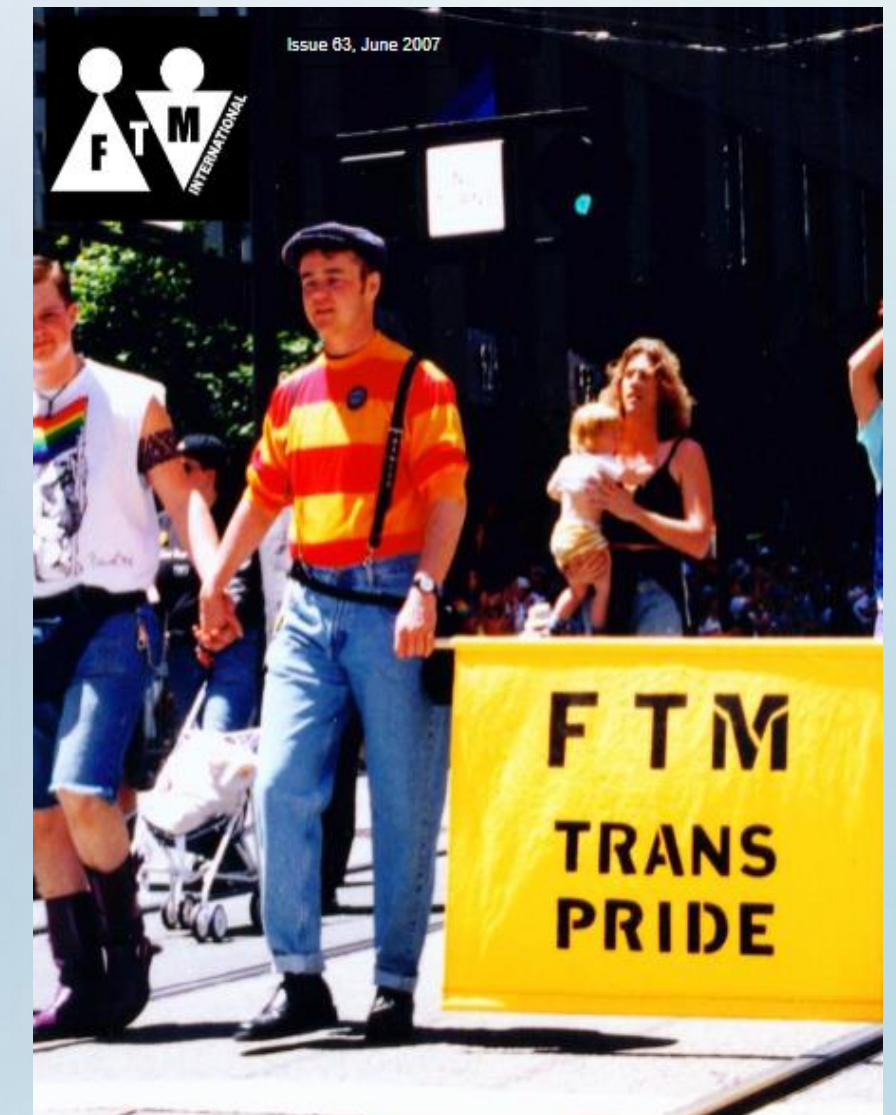


[FTML.org History](#)
[Wayback Access](#)

The Publication

In 1987, Lou Sullivan created the first 4-page *FTM* newsletter. Sullivan covertly photocopied these issues using an office copy machine, and mailed them out of his primary residence in San Francisco (*FTM* Issue 29, p. 1). *FTM* was mailed in plain brown envelopes for the discreet protection of trans identities (*FTM Newsletter Panel*, 0:26:15-0:26:35). Kevin Horowitz edited early editions of *FTM*, and provided humorous hand-drawn cartoons (*FTM Newsletter Panel*, 0:22:23, 0:23:00-0:23:20). Additionally, Horowitz arranged the very first newsletter using a software called *Quark Xpress* (*FTM* Issue 23, p. 10). Sullivan paid every fee associated with *FTM* out of his own pocket — subscription fees collected did not cover the entirety of photocopying, printing, postage, and voicemail charges associated with the free peer counseling Sullivan took on (*FTM Newsletter Panel*, 0:16:22-0:16:57). Fiercely, Sullivan refused to turn away individuals who could not pay, ensuring all trans individuals in need were able to access community resources (*FTM* Issue 29, p. 1). Green notes that “[*FTM*] want[s] to make it possible for brothers in pain and need to get information ... [no one] should be excluded from knowledge just because they have no money” (*FTM* Issue 25, p. 1).

After Sullivan’s passing in 1991 due to AIDS related complications, Jamison Green took over the project, basing it out of Green’s primary residence (*FTM* Issue 34, p. 1). In 1991,



“Cover”, FTM
Issue #63, 2007

omekas.library.uvic.ca/s/ftm